DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 463 535 CS 510 861

AUTHOR Rhodes-Kline, Anne K.
TITLE [Reading Recovery] Qualitative Surveys Summary Report, 1995-96.
INSTITUTION Maine Univ., Orono. Center for Early Literacy.
SPONS AGENCY Maine State Dept. of Education, Augusta.
PUB DATE 1996-11-22
NOTE 21p.
AVAILABLE FROM University of Maine, College of Education & Human Development, 5766 Shibles Hall, Orono, ME 04469-5766. Tel: 207-581-2438; Fax: 207-581-2423; Web site: http://www.ume.maine.edu/~cel.
PUB TYPE Reports - Research (143)
EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Administrator Attitudes; Early Intervention; *Parent Attitudes; Primary Education; *Program Evaluation; Public Schools; Questionnaires; *Reading Programs; Remedial Programs; State Programs; *Teacher Attitudes; Teacher Surveys
IDENTIFIERS Administrator Surveys; *Maine; Parent Surveys; *Reading Recovery Projects

ABSTRACT

As part of program evaluation for the Reading Recovery (RR) program in Maine, parents, classroom teachers, administrators, and RR teachers responded to open-ended survey questions, and they rated the program along dimensions of quality. This report summarizes and synthesizes the responses received across the state of Maine to the surveys distributed during the 1995-96 academic year. Response rates were very high, ranging from 76% to 100%. Overall, all groups of respondents rated the program very favorably, with the majority of comments also reflecting approval and support for the program. The most frequent concerns raised were funding and how more children could benefit from Reading Recovery. For parent surveys, 1,087 responded out of 1,429, for a response rate of 76%. Of 535 surveys distributed to classroom teachers, 493 were returned, for a response rate of 92%. Out of 250 questionnaires distributed to administrators, 198 were returned, for a return rate of 79%. For RR teachers, 171 surveys were returned from 182 trained RR teachers, for a return rate of 94%. All 68 RR teachers in training returned their questionnaires, giving this group a 100% response rate. (Contains many comments from parents, classroom teachers, administrators, teachers trained in Reading Recovery, and teachers in training.) (NKA)

Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made
from the original document.

ED 463 535

[Reading Recovery] Qualitative Surveys Summary Report, 1995-96

Anne K. Rhodes-Kline

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☐ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

P. F. Moore

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

CS 510 861

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

1995-96 Qualitative Surveys Summary Report

Anne K. Rhodes-Kline
Center for Early Literacy
College of Education, University of Maine

November 22, 1996

As part of program evaluation for the Reading Recovery (RR) program in Maine, parents, classroom teachers, administrators, and RR teachers responded to open-ended survey questions, and they rated the program along dimensions of quality. Surveys were returned to RR Teacher Leaders, who summarized the responses in their respective sites and then sent the summaries and representative responses on to the Center for Early Literacy at the University of Maine. This report synthesizes and summarizes the responses received across the state of Maine to the surveys distributed during the 1995-96 academic year.

The survey forms are standard for RR sites in the United States, and many of the questions were updated in the spring of 1996. Because the revisions were received from RR headquarters after some Teacher Leaders had already distributed the forms, not all respondents received the updated survey forms. Three RR sites in Maine responded to the old survey questions, and the remaining seven sites responded to the new survey questions. On all but the parent survey forms, the wording of the quantitative rating questions were changed in the new version. Answers to both versions of the survey are summarized.

Response rates were very high, ranging from 76% to 100%. Overall, all groups of respondents rated the program very favorably, with the majority of comments also reflecting approval and support for the program. The most frequent concerns raised were funding and how more children could benefit from RR.

Parents

One thousand, eighty-seven (1087) surveys were returned from 1429 parents, for a response rate of 76%. All parents were asked to choose the response between 1, "not a very good program" and 5, "a very good program," that best represented their opinion of RR. A whopping 93% of them, or 841 out of the 928 who answered this question, used the most positive option, "a very good program." Almost all of the others chose the next highest response. The mean response was 4.9.

Parents' reactions to the program were almost singular in their support. Many expressed appreciation for the changes in their children's skills.

> The program is the best thing that could have been done for our son and I am very pleased that the school cares enough about its children to have this program.

CS 510 861

My daughter is somewhat shy and could have been easily overlooked so the one-to-one help was valuable for her.

Don't ever stop this program, it really works.

So many children in previous years have been set back or sorted out as a slow learner when other issues kept them from reaching their potential. Reading Recovery has opened the door to reading for her.

I am very impressed and pleased beyond words at the difference the RR program made in [child's] life.

My husband and I feel very fortunate to live in a community that values its children to have such wonderful schools and programs such as RR. Thank you!

Without this program I would be at a loss as to how to help my son. Thank you for offering such a wonderful program to him.

This was great! Worth every penny!

It's painful to admit that your child is struggling... however, if your child does need help with reading skills, [the] RR program will enable your child to gain the skills...

I want to thank all involved with this marvelous program... You have opened my son's eyes to another world and he's so proud of himself.

My other daughter is in 7th grade and has a learning disability. I think this program would have made a great deal of difference if she [had had] it in her earlier school years.

One family, in the words of the Teacher Leader, "was so impressed with the program that they established a special fund at the school department to be used in any way that would help the program."

Some parents noted the accomplishments of their children after the RR program.

My son certainly has learned new ways of figuring out the words that he doesn't know and is more willing to try to do things on his own.

My son is better able to problem solve.

At first I questioned the program, but seeing the difference in [child] I know it was the best answer for her - I see a little girl who reads things on T.V., road signs, magazines, etc. I'm very happy with the RR program and teacher!!

My child is reading to me almost every night. He is doing so good in school now. It excites me when my son brings home a library book and reads to me.

I couldn't believe how fast he learned to read.

Reading Recovery helped my child do a 360 in school. If it weren't for RR he would have struggled through all of first grade.

RR benefits should be advertised more.

It is the most positive thing that has happened to my son this year in school. He made such progress so quickly it was amazing. He felt so good about himself and still does.

I have had other children in this program. It's been a huge success for my children and family.

Other parents noted improvements in their children's attitudes about school and their self-esteem after the RR program.

She enjoys school more and feels that she can help the teacher with the younger children.

My son has become more confident in participating in class. His self-esteem has definitely been boosted.

It has made him more self-confident and very proud.

He is able to keep up with his peers and feels good about himself since he is able to read.

[Child] went from feeling "stupid" to having a lot of confidence in her reading abilities. She is very proud of her skills and is always looking for someone to read to.

My daughter showed a lot more confidence in herself and also had better self-esteem.

This can only help any child. They develop several reading strategies to help themselves which only inspires self-confidence. If not for RR, his attitude could have been very hard to recover.

Some parents noted the importance of parental involvement in children's reading. This was an idea also reflected by the responses of RR teachers, which are summarized later in this report.

I feel this is a very enriching program for parents as well as child.

It is extremely important that the parents have an active part in this program. When they bring their books home every night, have them read to you. It really is wonderful to see how everything comes together.

[RR Teacher] was great! She wrote progress notes and I saw her 3-4 times to discuss in person [child's] progress.

This program has been a very positive program in my daughter's life. I felt she got a lot out of the program especially where often times I was lacking due to my work.

If you can get your child into the program you would not be sorry. Not only does it teach the child but it also teaches the adult to teach the child-- Excellent program.

Other comments from parents included wishes that the program could serve more children.

This program needs to be made available for all children who qualify.

It's too bad this program doesn't go higher than first grade.

I wish more children could benefit from this program.

I only wish that there were more funds for programs such as this. Keep up the fight for better education for all children.

I only hope that funding continues for RR. My family greatly appreciates this extra service.

We wish our child had been able to be involved with the program sooner in the school year. Because he did not start until March, I am worried about what will happen in second grade (he didn't "graduate" from the program, the school year ended.)

I hope the school's budget problems does not effect this program.

I think you should try to find reading specialist that are not so expensive then more children that really need the help don't go without because of the cost. I think every child should have the same opportunity to learn to read. If they can't it shouldn't be a matter of expense for someone's learning.

Some responses came back from parents that spoke volumes between the lines. In communities where some parents' literacy skills are low, the benefits of an effective early literacy program can be immeasurable. One mother who is nearly illiterate responded to the survey even though she does not visit her child's school or engage in school activities. She wrote,

> They said was glad that [child] was doing good in reading.

Classroom Teachers

Five hundred thirty-five (535) surveys were distributed to classroom teachers working in schools with RR. Of those, 493, or 92%, were returned. Some classroom teachers responded to the question, "What impact has RR had on RR students' classroom performance?" Possible answers ranged from 1, "very little impact," to 5, "very large impact." The average response was 4.7, and 94% of classroom teachers responded either 4 or 5, with 78% of them, 287 out of 366, choosing the highest rating, "very large impact."

One hundred twenty-four (124) classroom teachers responded to the question, "Have any children from your classroom been involved in the RR program this year? If so, how much has the RR teacher let you know about the progress of this/these student(s)?" Eighty-two percent of the teachers who responded to this question chose either 4 or 5, with the mean response 4.6. These teachers were also asked to respond to the statement, "Circle the number below which best describes your view of RR." Possible responses were between 1, "not a very good program," to 5, "a very good program." The mean response was 4.7, with 77% of teachers choosing 5, and another 14% choosing 4.

Many classroom teachers' comments reflected positively on children from their classrooms who had progressed.

> Confident, more eager to read books, writing ability has increased.

> RR has made teaching reading much smoother in my class. Children who need extra help receive it and many of them are able to move quickly enough to become independent readers and writers.

> The students have gained more confidence in their ability to read. The students did well in transferring skills learned back into the classroom.

> The children pick up books more readily to read on their own, greater participation during shared reading, a willingness to read to others, and more confidence overall.

> Most [RR children] have surpassed the literacy group children despite some heavy duty problems.

> [Students] seem more confident when reading, they are able to read books at a higher level, they have strategies to figure unknown words. They are more excited about reading!
>
> Our RR teachers are very skilled at what they do.
>
> This program has enormous value for our first graders - many of our children come from homes where reading is not a priority.
>
> Better use of strategies, more persistence in making meaning.
>
> [RR] takes these at-risk students and brings them up to grade level.
>
> This is a powerful program! Kids involved in RR are getting much more support than they would in Title I services.
>
> This program meets the needs of those children who require intensive one-on-one instruction, not available to the general population due to time and budgetary restraints.

One unsolicited letter from a special education teacher said the following to a RR teacher leader.

> Today the numbers are down for students coming into the school and I feel that your efforts have a lot to do with it. It is evident in the way the kids approach reading and in the way they see themselves as readers. I have never had readers who would reread stories and work to use expression. I feel the difference is directly attributable to the efforts you and the other teachers at your school have made to target literacy and to incorporate Reading Recovery strategies and materials in the reading program at [name of school]

Other classroom teachers affirmed that parents of RR children were very supportive of the program.

> [Parents] are very positive - pleased with child's progress.
>
> [Parents] are very grateful that it is being offered. They have noticed improvement in their child's reading. They have seen their child's interest in books improve.

Other comments from classroom teachers indicated that RR may have affected students' attitudes and self-esteem.

> RR children feel more part of the classroom reading groups.
>
> New confidence and self-esteem helped in all classroom areas--not just in reading.

[Student] changed into a person who saw himself as a reader and writer.

Increased self esteem about learning to read, attitude shift from "I can't" to "I can," increased independence in the classroom.

They are excited and proud about their reading abilities, self-confidence in all subject areas seems to increase (in most cases).

All of them have made significant progress. As their reading has improved so have their organizational skills and self-esteem. They love to share books.

More confidence in their own abilities. Pride in their accomplishments. Recognizing their own growth.

The children have moved up in reading groups, have great strategies, and their self-esteem has blossomed.

Many schools adopt RR in conjunction with a school wide focus on early literacy. Some classroom teachers remarked that the implementation of RR had impacted the way literacy is taught throughout the school. Some of these comments refer to programs designed to familiarize classroom teachers and special educators with the theories of literacy acquisition on which RR is based.

I feel that we've done a complete turn-around in our methods of teaching reading and I feel that these new techniques truly give us a more specific idea of strengths, weaknesses, and progress.

The RR teacher who models literacy group(ings) helps the students and the classroom teacher.

[RR Teacher] has done a superb job keeping me informed of strategies used as well as of the progress of the children. She is anxious to share what she knows so that we can apply similar strategies in our classroom where we can.

I have enjoyed working with [RR Teacher]. She is very dedicated to the program and shares information on how things are going with her students.

RR teachers have done a wonderful job training classroom teachers to use RR strategies in their classrooms. This has been very successful.

I think it is a fantastic program. I wish that we (classroom teachers) could work with RR teachers to help promote reading in the classroom using RR techniques, etc. I know that

we don't have the one on one, but we certainly could benefit from learning the techniques used

Wish incorporate different classwork with the RR components. The kids have a difficult time carrying over what they learn into the classroom

Some classroom teachers indicated that they appreciated the assessment information that RR provided

This program has given me assessment information that identified what areas need to be tended to

The Observation Survey information helped me to use tools so that I can "diagnose" my students' approach to print. These valuable tools help me to feel more solid in my approach to a remedy (such as offering new strategies, changing habits and giving new direction)

I am glad to see students' progress being evaluated at certain points more this year than in the past

Many classroom teachers expressed the wish that more children could benefit from RR, or that children could be served beyond the first grade

I would like to see this a full-time program as so many children need this service

I feel that the RR program is one of the best investments which our school districts use money to support. I wish that it could service more children, but I am grateful that it is available to those who are the most needy

I support RR all the way!! We're so lucky to have it and I wish we had another teacher

I would like some of the other children to have the opportunity to work one-on-one with [RR Teacher]

I wish more children could receive the intense service

I feel RR is a good program but I worry about what happens to and with these students after first grade

Some expressed concerns regarding the administration of the program

It would be better if Title 1 and RR were funded as two separate programs

> It's hard when a lot of children leave the class at different times all throughout the day, but I know they benefit.

Some of the classroom teachers' comments raised issues with the philosophy of helping the lowest children first.

> I wish there was some way of serving more children. First graders on the whole still need a lot of individual attention. I wish the special education and younger students could be served later in the year. Get the other students out of the program early and quickly.

> If there is a waiting list I would like to be sure second round children have an equal opportunity for completion. I would like to see the year divided equally.

> The selection of students has always resulted in at least one child in my classroom being a year-long RR student. This seems to indicate that maybe those really low ones might do better going in on the second round when they've become more acclimated to school. Is the program supposed to serve one student all year?

Other criticisms were varied, and reflected concerns about what skills children learn in RR, what they miss from regular classroom instruction, the accessibility of the RR teacher, and pull-out programs in general.

> The children become very skilled at decoding. At times I feel comprehension isn't stressed enough. The child may be able to "read" the story, but doesn't understand what it is about.

> [Children] are frustrated when they return to the classroom, worried about the activities they have missed. Math scores have dropped for students who have classes scheduled during math times.

> It often seemed that I needed to catch one of the RR teachers on the run--so I did not always feel our information was shared.

> I feel the program was successful with this child. I am philosophically opposed to pull-out programs and would feel that the personality of the child should be looked at in making a decision to put that child in the program.

Administrators

Out of 250 questionnaires distributed, 198 were returned for a return rate of 79%. When asked "What impact has implementing the RR program had in your school over the last 5 or 10 years," 71 administrators, or 54% of those who responded, indicated that it had had a "very large

impact." The mean response was 4.4, on a scale that ranged from 1, "very little impact" to 5, "very large impact."

Most (48 out of 58, or 83%) administrators responding to the question that asked them to "circle the number which best describes your view of RR," circled 5, the highest response, for "a very good program." The mean response was 4.8, on a scale from 1 "not a very good program" to 5 "a very good program."

Comments from administrators indicated strong support for the program. Many indicated that the students in RR had become independent readers and writers.

> Immense growth that has extended now into 4th grade!
>
> Several children in first grade either directly through the services of Reading Recovery or indirectly through EDU 580 are readers. These children most likely would have had severe reading difficulty--all 1st and K students benefited.
>
> We have watched some of our lowest grade 1 students progress as fast and many times faster than other grade 1 students. Thus, they should not receive on-going services they would have needed without the program. They feel like readers, and they are readers!
>
> Many of our students need the intensive one-on-one instruction that RR provides.
>
> Reading Recovery has had a very positive impact on our first grade students.
>
> [RR] has made a significant impact. Those students who have been discontinued are at or above their grade level. It has also reduced the number of referrals to special education.
>
> Students in the program have benefitted from the quality of instruction given, some have exited reading as average first graders and those remaining have made strong gains. Other students have benefitted from the increased emphasis on reading and teacher awareness of the needs of at-risk readers. Emotional gains are less measurable, but evident.

Other administrators noticed changes in children's self-esteems after taking part in RR.

> The children with whom [RR Teacher] has worked have made significant gains in self-confidence and in other subjects, not to mention impressive gains in reading. Other children have benefitted as [RR Teacher] has shared techniques with teachers and with aides.
>
> Reading Recovery has impacted the target children directly in a very positive way! They love it, and self-esteem rises as children meet success.

Some administrators reported that they had measured fewer retentions and/or referrals to special education as a result of the program. Others hoped they would see such impacts in the future.

> Fewer students referred to special education; fewer retentions in first grade than previous years. More interest in RR strategies by classroom teachers.

> In the second year of the program it has been interesting to track the performance of the students. Most are doing well. The numbers of Title I and Special Education referrals has decreased as well.

> I am very hopeful that within another year we will see a real difference in Special Education referrals at 2nd and 3rd grades.

> Will the gains that students make be sustained over time, or will they lose ground over the coming year until they are again near the "bottom"?

Some comments reflected that the implementation of RR, along with other measures to target early literacy, had impacted the school.

> This program has had a positive impact on the whole school.

> The Reading Recovery program and the course which staff members have taken have fundamentally changed beliefs about reading instruction.

> RR has not only significantly helped the children and parents directly involved in the instructional program, it has also served as a powerful professional development model for the whole school.

Administrators were asked for their impressions of what classroom teachers thought about the RR program. Consistent with responses from teachers themselves, most administrators sensed support for the program from classroom teachers.

> [Teachers] are now able to see more success and are much less skeptical of the program. They want to observe their students more often next year in the RR sessions in order to learn more about their progress and strategies/ language used.

> There is no question that [teachers] are impressed with the support and results.

> [Classroom teachers] with whom [RR Teacher] has worked are highly impressed with its success. Some remain skeptical, most are positive.

> Teachers are very supportive of Reading Recovery.

[Classroom teachers] are thrilled - not only with the service to their children and its consequent benefits, but also from the assistance provided by our staff to them (as teachers of reading in classrooms).

[Teachers are] anxious to get to full implementation. Most discontinued students are among the best readers in each class. Results have been sustained for three years. Grade 1 teachers are excited about their own professional growth in reading.

They are increasingly impressed by the positive influence of RR.

The primary teachers are very grateful for the support of Reading Recovery teachers who have worked extra hard to help classroom teachers with techniques.

A small number of comments reflected possible reasons for lack of support from some classroom teachers.

They [classroom teachers] wish their daily routine could be similar to the structure of a RR day. (Student-teacher ratio, dedicated time for paperwork, follow-up, etc.)

Positive comments, but concern about limited availability.

Administrators also indicated what they had gathered about parents' impressions of the program. These comments reflected the strong support for the program conveyed by parents' responses.

All respond that their child is hooked on reading, loves to read, takes book in hand without pressure. They've seen noticeable improvements in fluency, word attack skills, and strategies.

Parents have been very supportive - they are appreciative of the time their child receives, and of the materials they bring home to work with.

They are very pleased with the program and laud its accomplishments with their child vigorously.

At one community visioning session this year, a parent described RR as "awesome." I believe that reflects the attitude of most of the parents whose children are part of the program.

Parents are overwhelmingly positive and appreciative. They report that students feel successful in the program from its onset. Students are given independence in their reading/writing. Awareness of the importance of parents working with RR strategies at home is growing.

[Parents] are delighted their children are becoming readers!

Those [parents] who are supportive in regards to following through at home have been very positive and grateful for the program.

Many expressed financial concerns regarding the program.

[Concerns are] time! Money! How to make our Chapter 1 and district budget stretch to meet the needs of all who can benefit!

I'm concerned these students will lose the benefits of the program by not reading through the summer. They would benefit from a review at the beginning of next year but funds don't allow it. We are expanding next year to full implementation and we have coordinated the program with our special education staff.

As always, financial considerations are a main concern, but we hope to train two more teachers in the classroom aspects of using Reading Recovery methods.

As our student population continues to grow so does the need for increased services to our most needy first graders.

Classroom teachers need to receive training so they can help make "carry over" succeed.

Funding. How to assess earlier in the fall and thus begin the program earlier, and educating all staff and parents of the wisdom and cost-effectiveness of the early intervention RR offers.

Next year increased enrollments could get us to the point where we no longer have full implementation.

Some administrators commented that paperwork creates a large burden on RR staff, and others expressed concern about resource allocation and the selection of children for the program.

There's too much pressure on the staff - too much paperwork, and the RR people should learn the lesson of their special education colleagues over the past 18 years. These are the #1 and #2 reasons people leave the field.

Strongest support comes from first-grade teachers, followed by those taking EDU 580, who recognize the value of common language and comprehensive assessment. At all levels, teachers appreciate RR theory, but the importance and cost of individual instruction is being challenged.

How can we be sure that we target the right children at the right time?

Trained Teachers

One hundred seventy-one (171) surveys were returned from 182 trained RR teachers for a return rate of 94%. Trained teachers responding to the statement, "I have become a more effective RR teacher this year," gave an average response of 4.5 on a scale that ranged from 1, "strongly disagree," to 5, "strongly agree." Ninety-three percent (93%) of the responses were either 4 or 5, with more than half responding "strongly agree."

Trained RR teachers who responded to the question, "As a RR teacher, how much have you learned this year," gave a mean response of 4.1 on a scale ranging from 1, "nothing," to 5, "a great deal." Over half of all these trained RR teachers responded with the number 4. These teachers also responded to the question, "Circle the number which best describes your view of RR." Possible responses ranged from 1, "not a very good program," to 5, "a very good program." The average response was 4.9, and fully 88% percent of respondents (36 out of 41) used 5, the most positive category, indicating strong allegiances to and positive views of the RR program from trained teachers.

Comments from trained RR teachers included statements affirming their support of the RR program.

> I thoroughly enjoy what I'm doing. What is more important than teaching children to read?
>
> I enjoyed discontinuing two students and finding out that both had made gains at year's end.
>
> [One of the highlights has been] student empowerment! Discontinuing students earlier was rewarding, but following up and discovering the superb gains of last year's discontinued students was the highlight for me this year! I now really know when they are ready to discontinue!
>
> Truthfully, most of the year has been a highlight, ...hearing parents tell of children wanting books for presents and seeing the confidence build during the program.
>
> A child who would have been labeled learning disabled, now reads in the average of his class.
>
> [One of the highlights of my RR teaching experience this year has been] doing test follow-up on my discontinued child from last year and finding that he is right where he should be!

Others commented on their growth as teachers and the importance of continuing to improve.

> I understand more of the theory behind RR and feel more of a risk taker.

I am more ingrained in the procedural issues thus allowing me to concentrate on the process.

I have become a better observer as I have gained experience and am better able to make decisions with more knowledge.

Need to spend more time with the theory beyond what we do.

I think that I need to be challenged to use the *Becoming Literate* book. Some chapters and/or parts of chapters have been referenced and read but I feel a need to get into it more and use it for discussion in our continuing contact.

[One of my greatest concerns about my growth as a RR teacher is that] it's too easy to make assumptions that what worked for one [child] will work for another - rather than checking the *Guidebook* for ideas and confirmation.

I would like to be kept up to date on the newest findings in the field, particularly with strong teaching models - perhaps videos of strong teaching. I would like some insights on how to help children who do everything slowly.

One of the themes from the parents' responses was repeated by trained RR teachers: the importance of parent involvement with their children's literacy learning.

Cooperation between home and school really makes a difference.

I always invite parents to observe a lesson, call or send notes, and talk with them at conference time. Children do well when their parents are informed and involved.

Besides phone calls, I have met with most of the parents to talk, view books and go over their part. I have also asked and had the parents come and observe lessons.

I do individual orientations with each child's parents (instead of a group) at the beginning of the program. They are better informed this way because they ask questions and I can tailor the discussions to their child.

[One of my goals for next year is] a parental newsletter to keep them better informed and more involved. I needed to arrange student readers for all four of my kids originally because books weren't coming back. It's like the parents felt it's the school's problem, not theirs.

Many trained RR teachers commented on their need for colleague interaction. Those who had it spoke praises of how professional dialogue helped them be more effective, while those who lacked it longed for it.

Having a colleague in the same building has made me think more closely about problems, solutions, and ideas in general.

I would like more work during continuing contact on analyzing records. The discussion time is so valuable.

I have so much to learn. Sometimes it's hard to find what I need to study to help a child. Discussions with other RR teachers helps me clarify my thoughts. Once a month is not enough.

Having a teacher-in-training to work with [has been a highlight of my RR experience this year] because it made me more articulate in stating why I would do things in a certain way.

I find it helpful to share insights/discoveries/successful experiments with other teachers.

I found it interesting and beneficial when other RR people visited and shared their knowledge.

I found the colleague visits to be especially useful to keep me on track and to sharpen my skills. Getting into *Becoming Literate* helped too, for clarifying some of the *Guidebook*.

I got a lot out of the fall conference. It is important to have that time with my colleagues.

I really enjoyed our continuing contact sessions because of our guests from New Zealand and Australia. It offered wonderful insights into the program.

As the years pass from our training year, there is far less contact and support. Teaching "at risk" students is very challenging but also difficult. There is little to no positive feedback and limited opportunity to process and discuss application and interpretations of theory. RR leaders need to take a close look at how to best support their teachers to ensure that the program continues to be successful.

I have a greater concern this year because I have relocated and don't know many people. I am used to having a colleague in the building to puzzle out problems.

[My biggest concern is] lack of opportunities to share and pick each other's brains.

[I am concerned about the] lack of colleague contact.

I miss the discussions with other RR teachers. I always intend to maintain contacts during the year, but it's difficult to make it happen.

I don't have other trained Reading Recovery peers to discuss ideas, concerns and successes on a regular basis (weekly)

[I] need more on-site observations of colleagues

I miss the weekly contacts. I am the only RR teacher and quite removed from the rest. I need more colleague contact.

The life of many RR teachers is busy, and some comments reflected that there is not enough time to do all they would like to do.

[My concerns are] getting all the work done for both jobs [and] not having the time to bring peers in to help with a difficult child.

[My concern is] why can't I get the students out faster?

[My goal for next year is to] begin seeing students earlier in the year.

... my superintendent does not understand working with 6 students, she wants to get more for her money.

(District) has not money to put into training others. I am rushing from K building to (other school) for RR. It is rare I feel I have time to go to the bathroom.

A small number of comments reflected differences between the RR teacher's expectations and the reality of at-risk children, whose performance is unpredictable, in both positive and negative directions.

It has been difficult working with the same hard to accelerate children. I always start out with high expectations and am then disappointed when I cannot get them to discontinue.

My lowest entering child, who also was very young, discontinued! That proves that I cannot predict who will be successful or not, because I had real concerns for some time over his progress and then suddenly he took off!

Some RR teachers noted the importance of meshing RR children's classroom instruction with what they learn in RR.

The biggest problem continues to be the often mismatch of what the child does during the lesson and what is going on in the classroom. We need to have more teachers take the supportive classroom course.

> [A highlight of the year for me has been] having the program seen by others as an important aspect of the whole school program.

One comment reflected the time-consuming nature of accurate data collection.

> RR really does make a difference for the child. Unfortunately, the data collection and record keeping - combined with the many obligations of also being a classroom teacher is overwhelming at times. Is it possible now that RR is a "proven" program to have less data collection?

In-Training RR Teachers

All 68 RR teachers in training returned their questionnaires, giving this group a 100% response rate. Those who responded to the statement, "My view of teaching low progress children how to read has changed considerably this year," indicated strong agreement, with a mean response of 4.8, on a scale from 1, "strongly disagree," to 5, "strongly agree." Forty-five (45) out of 52 RR teachers in training selected 5, the highest category.

Sixteen (16) RR teachers in training responded to the question, "As a RR teacher, how much have your learned this year?" All sixteen selected either 4 or 5, on a scale from 1, "nothing," to 5, "a great deal." The mean response was 4.9, and 88% of respondents selected 5, the highest category.

Comments from RR teachers in training indicated extreme enthusiasm for the program.

> [The highlights have been] seeing a disengaged boy go from defiance and lack of interest to a love of reading as his knowledge grew!

> This program has really helped me understand how a child develops as a reader. None of my graduate courses really taught me specifics--and, applying the knowledge learned in class to actual cases was invaluable. Also having the teacher leader observe my students and help and support me in the process of learning was very important. The colleague visit was also very helpful--I wish there had been even more!

> Children learn to read but not just items. RR has propelled me to learn more about literacy.

> I now feel that I have had a major part in developing some life long learners. I am much more conscious of the gains that children can make when provided with the proper tools.

> Children can learn to read and write without knowing all their letters before starting

I felt that my role was very passive. Now I realize that the interaction (prompts and praises) are very powerful. I am no longer passive.

The biggest change in my view of the reading process is that I now realize that it is a very personal, unique experience for each child. Before my RR training, I did not understand the complex strategies that were involved in orchestrating the reading process, and how each child integrates these strategies in personal ways.

RR has influenced not only the way I look at how children learn to read and write, but how people learn in general.

As a RR teacher, I now view myself not as a dispenser of items of knowledge, but as a facilitator whose mission it is to guide a child to reading independence - using the child's known strengths as the foundation on which he will build his self-extending reading system.

The concept of building on what the child knows has strongly influenced my view of how children learn to read and write.

[One goal is] more care in book selection. Rather late in my training year I realized the power that choosing "the right book at the right time" (balancing supports and challenges) could have!

[One of the highlights has been] seeing the self-esteem of my students grow when they discovered they know how to learn words.

Some comments reflected again the cooperation necessary between parents, classroom teachers, and RR teachers in order to make the program work.

I never realized all that was involved in teaching reading. This class has taught me so much. I have passed some of this on to my teachers and it has helped all of us.

Learning to read is a team effort involving the parents, classroom teachers, RR [teachers] and other support staff.